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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

Committee on the Development of Trade

Working Party on Facilitation of International Trade Procedures

UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

Trade and Development Board

Advisory Services on Trade Documentation

TRADE DOCUMENTATION INFORMATION

NOTES ON SOME NATIONAL COMMITTEES DEALING WITH THE FACILITATION OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE PROCEDURES

(Note by the UNCTAD and ECE Secretariats)

I. NETHERLANDS: NETHERLANDS COMMITTEE FOR THE SIMPLIFICATION OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE PROCEDURES (SITPRONETH)

The SITPRONETH was set up in March 1972 by the Nederlands Normalisatie-Instituut NNI (Netherlands Standardization Institute) in collaboration with several trade and transport organizations.

The name SITPRONETH was borrowed from the United Kingdom Committee SITPRO, in order to improve mutual understanding among similar organizations in other countries.

SITPRONETH is organized with one co-ordination committee and the following working groups:

WG 1 ECE layout key
WG 2 Insurance
WG 3 Banking
WG 4 Transport and Ports
WG 5 Public authorities
WG 6 Coding

The number of working groups can be increased or reduced according to the needs.

The originators of SITPRONETH are:

- Central Bureau of Rhine - and Inlandnavigation
- Central Chamber of Trade Promotion
- Directorate-General of Shipping (Ministry of Transport)
- General National Association of transport users and transporters for own account
- Netherlands Export Federation
- Federation of Netherlands forwarding agents
- Netherlands National Committee, International Cargo Handling Co-ordination Association (ICHCA)
- National Dutch Committee for the International Chamber of Commerce

- Chamber of Commerce of Amsterdam
- Chamber of Commerce of Rotterdam
- Association of Netherlands Chambers of Commerce
- The Dutch Road haulage Association
- Roman Catholic Road haulage Association
- Protestant Road haulage Association
- Royal Dutch Airlines
- Netherlands Bankers Association
- The Netherlands Management Association
- Netherlands Rail
- Netherlands Standardization Institute
- Shipping Federation of Amsterdam
- Shipping Federation of Rotterdam
- Editors of National Road Bill
- Association of Rotterdam Shipowners Agents
- Association of Rotterdam Stevedores
- Association of Transport Insurance Companies PTT
- International Container Bureau
- Royal Dutch Shipowners Association

The tasks and mandate of SITPRONETH are:

1. To uniform and to standardize trade, transport and governmental documents in the full sense of the word, based on internationally accepted standards (ECE layout key).

2. Limitation of the number of these documents by:

(a) promoting abolition;
(b) combining purposes which can be reached by use of fewer documents;

3. To uniform, to standardize and to simplify trade procedures, as well as those between trading partners as those in relation to the governments.

4. To promote those systems and possibilities in documents and those procedures which enable the application of information processing and means of communication.

5. As special part of point 4, promoting coding systems which have to join already accepted international systems with the final object to have one standardized code left.

In order to realize an international uniformity and standardization as complete as possible, SITPRONETH has to keep in touch and maintain collaboration (apart from the mutual collaboration among the interested organizations) with:

- similar institutions in other countries;
- private international organizations, which partially have the same aim;
- official supranational and intergovernmental organizations.

The originators of SITPRONETH are of the opinion that an inventory of all existing documents, procedures, conditions etc. shall be an essential starting-point for the task. Therefore the collaboration of all members is required.

II. CANADA: CANADA ORGANIZATION FOR THE SIMPLIFICATION OF TRADE PROCEDURES (COSTPRO)

The Canadian Organization for the Simplification of Trade Procedures was created in response to the need for a national organization which would facilitate Canada's trade by the introduction of improved methods of information exchange relating to the movement of goods, and by the simplification of outmoded procedures.

Since February 1972 COSTPRO has taken as its terms of reference:

1. the reduction, simplification, and international harmonization of all documents used in Canada's foreign trade;

2. the assurance that the information flow relating to the distribution of goods facilitates and does not impede Canada's industrial development or growth in external trade;

3. the profitable use of all modern techniques and technology and in particular automatic data processing and the further use of computers;

4. the improvement of trade procedures and the elimination of national and international requirements which cause delay or are uneconomic in international transactions.

Because the private sector and government have joint and separate interests, it was decided that there should be consultation and co-operation between them. COSTPRO is therefore comprised of representatives from industry and government who join together to develop and implement COSTPRO's work programme. In the short term, COSTPRO is working towards the introduction of a document alignment system based on the ECE layout key. In the longer term COSTPRO's work programme should be geared to that of the international community.

At present COSTPRO is comprised of several government departments and industry associations. The latter represent exporters, importers, forwarders, carriers and bankers. The Organization is jointly financed by all of these interests.

COSTPRO provides a vehicle for the co-ordination of Canadian views in dealing with similar bodies in other countries, and to this end COSTPRO is establishing relationsswith such organizations as a means of further enhancing the international facilitation effort.

COSTPRO's headquarters are located at 9th floor, 2085 Union Street, Montreal 111, P.Q., Canada.

III. HONG KONG: HONG KONG SIMPLER TRADE DOCUMENTS WORKING PARTY

1. The Hong Kong Simpler Trade Documents Working Party was established in 1967 to examine the possibilities of simplifying Hong Kong export documents. Membership comprised representatives from the principal organizational and sectoral business and industrial interests in Hong Kong concerned with the preparation and processing of trade documents and from several government departments with an interest in this field.

2. Over the five years of its existence, the Working Party has done much to promote the widest use of standardized and simplified trade documents in Hong Kong. It has been able to secure co-operation and support from many organizations in aligning their trade documents with the standard size (International A4) and layout necessary for multiple preparation and international usage. For this purpose, the Working Party has designed a master document accommodating the requirements of the majority of consignments shipped from Hong Kong. This can be used under the "one-run system" for the production of a series of aligned forms from the master document.

3. The intensive work done by the Working Party culminated in the issue of two reports in August, 1969 and January, 1972 entitled "Simpler Export Documents" and "Simpler Export Documents, A Current Reappraisal". Copies of the Reports may be obtained from the Secretary of the Working Party, to whom all correspondence should be addressed as follows:-

The Secretary,
Hong Kong Simpler Trade Documents Working Party,
c/o Commerce and Industry Department,
Fire Brigade Building,
Hong Kong.

IV. JAPAN: JAPAN COMMITTEE FOR STANDARDIZATION OF EXTERNAL TRADE DOCUMENTATION (JCSETD)

The background for the establishment of the JCSETD was the realization that long established practices of processing various international trade documents had proved obsolete and inefficient as well as inconvenient to meet with the new situation resulting from the rapid expansion of international trade and modernized methods of transportation and communication. The continued adherence to such practices would even incur the danger of becoming obstacles to international trade. It was also estimated that the ECE Layout Key and "one-run method" recommended by the ECE would provide a realistic and rational solution to this problem, as many countries had already adopted this system of trade documentation.

The JCSETD was established as the sole organization to work out the original draft of standardized documents for foreign trade. The Committee was formally established on February 25, 1971, with the strong support of Japanese Government. It is composed of the following 15 member organizations which represent their own business, such as shippers, shipowners, underwriters, bankers forwarding and warehousing firms:

Japan Foreign Trade Council, Inc.
The Japanese Shipowners' Association
The Japan Chamber of Commerce & Industry
Council of All Japan Exporters Association
The Marine & Fire Insurance Association of Japan
Federation of Bankers' Associations of Japan
Japan Freight Forwarders Federation
Japan Warehouses Association
Japan Customs Brokers Association
Japan Marine Surveyors & Sworn Measurers Association
New Japan Surveyors & Sworn Measurers Association
The Japan Cargo Tally Corporation
All Nippon Checkers Corporation
The Japan Container Association
Japanese National Committee of the ICC

The Ministry of International Trade and Industry, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Transport are represented by observers to the Committee. Within the Committee, there is subdivision between:

the Executive Committee: Composed of the representatives from various organizations and entitled to make final decisions.

and

the Technical Committee: Composed of the chiefs and experts from various organizations and divided into five Sub-Committees: (1) Exporters, (2) Carriers, (3) Forwarders and Customs Brokers, (4) Underwriters, (5) Bankers.

The special expert group has been formed in order to draft a new modal format for each document to be used for international trade including export declaration in line with the ECE layout key and following the "one-run method". The results of this study are expected to be published in a form of provisional recommendation to be submitted for the comments by the circles concerned.

The Secretariat will collect data and information concerning the standardizing operation of various foreign trade documents from both domestic and foreign sources for the reference of the working groups. The Committee is making efforts to have the circles concerned with foreign trade understand the significance and necessity of its duty by means of pamphlets etc.

Address of Secretariat Office: c/o Japan Foreign Trade Council, Inc.
World Trade Centre Building (6th floor),
5 Sanchome, Hamamatsu-chi, Shiba,
Minato-ku, Tokyo, Japan.

V. OTHER NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, ALREADY MENTIONED IN DOCUMENTS OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

Document TRADE/IRTP/2 of 23 July 1971 and Add.1-3 briefly describes the national organizations set up in the United Kingdom, Belgium, Sweden and the United States. The primary purpose of the following paragraphs is therefore to draw attention to the existence of these organizations.

UNITED KINGDOM: SITPRO (The Board for the Simplification of International Trade Procedures)

SITPRO was established by the Department of Trade and Industry of the United Kingdom Government in July 1970. It has fifteen members, drawn from the private and public sectors of industry, transport undertakings and Government departments, and it works in liaison with bodies such as the Association of British Chambers of Commerce, the British Shippers Council, the United Kingdom Chamber of Shipping, and the Economic Development Committee for the Movement of Exports.

BELGIUM: SIPROCOM (Comité pour la simplification des procédures du commerce international)

SIPROCOM comprises participants from the public sector (ministries, the Banque Nationale de Belgique, the Institut Belge de Normalisation, etc.) and from the private sector.

Four working groups have been set up to study questions relating to transport, trade and financial procedures, administrative procedures, and codes and computers.

SWEDEN: SWEDISH COMMITTEE ON TRADE DOCUMENTS

The Swedish Committee on Trade D cuments was founded in 1956. Its purpose is to ensure co-operation between the publ c and private int rests represented on it, with a view to the simplification and co-ordination of documents, primarily those required in external trade.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE DOCUMENTATION (NCITD)

The National Committee on Trade Documentation was established in 1967 to act as a co-ordinating body and to centralize information on problems of international trade documentation.